

U.S. Census Bureau Strategic Plan FY 2004-2008

Issued September 2003

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U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

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Introduction

MISSION

The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by our strong and capable workforce, our readiness to innovate, and our abiding commitment to our customers.

The U.S. Census Bureau is the premier source of information about the American people and the economy. More than just numbers, this information shapes important policy decisions that help improve the nation's social and economic conditions.

The production of high quality, relevant statistical information rests on principles that the Census Bureau holds dear. Openness to user and respondent concerns, independence and neutrality, strong statistical standards, and protection of confidentiality form the foundation for the work we do. These principles are reflected in Office of Management and Budget guidelines for the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by federal agencies.

The Census Bureau's mission is built around large-scale surveys and censuses. Activities involve survey and questionnaire design, geographic infrastructure update, and data collection, processing, and dissemination. Research and data analysis help improve processes from data collection through dissemination.

To accomplish its mission, the Census Bureau:

- Reengineers the 2010 census to be more efficient and cost effective, provide richer information, improve coverage accuracy, and reduce operational risk.
- Supplies economic indicators that include housing starts, retail and wholesale trade sales, international trade, corporate profits, and manufacturers' shipments, orders, and inventories, as well as the nation's official measures of income, poverty, and health insurance coverage.

As part of the Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau's Strategic Plan supports the Department's Strategic Plan.

Goal 1: *Provide the information and tools to maximize U.S. competitiveness and enable economic growth for American industries, workers, and consumers.*

Objective 1.3: *Supply key economic and demographic data to support effective decision-making of policymakers, businesses, and the American public.*

- Provides the statistical foundation and benchmark measures against which most data-based decisions and activities take place.
- Adapts to demographic, economic, and technological changes by innovating, while being mindful of respondent burden and privacy concerns.
- Maintains a high quality and motivated workforce and provides the environment to support them.

Through strategic planning, the Census Bureau determines how best to accomplish this mission. The Strategic Plan provides a framework for articulating program goals and builds these goals through consensus. The planning process promotes synergy, innovation, and efficiency.

It represents a better way of doing business.

Programs and Activities

The Census Bureau is the largest statistical agency of the federal government. While best known for the decennial census, it conducts numerous surveys and censuses that measure changing individual and household demographics and the economic condition of the nation. Activities include:

- **Censuses:**
 - The decennial census is the nation's oldest and most comprehensive source of population and housing information. As provided for in the Constitution, the U.S. Government uses the Census Bureau's count of the population in each state to apportion the seats in the House of Representatives. The decennial census data are also used in drawing congressional and state legislative districts and distributing hundreds of billions of dollars of federal funds each year. State, local, and tribal governments use the data to make a wide variety of decisions to improve their communities. Businesses, nonprofit organizations, and governments use it as the basis for research, planning, and investment. The decennial census produces the widest range of information available at the smallest geographic levels.
 - Every 5 years, the economic census provides a detailed portrait of the nation's economy. Related programs supply information about business ownership.
 - The census of governments, conducted at the same time as the economic census, covers government organization, public employment, and government finance.

- Surveys:
 - Demographic: The Census Bureau conducts household and institutional surveys, many of which are sponsored by other federal agencies. Information from these surveys is used to measure income, poverty, education, health care coverage, crime victimization, computer usage, and scores of other subjects that are vital to understanding the people of the United States. The Census Bureau also supplies data that is the basis for the Bureau of Labor Statistics' monthly unemployment rate and the Consumer Price Index.
 - Economic: Monthly, quarterly, and annual surveys yield information on the current state of the economy. Census Bureau economic surveys provide a majority of the information the Bureau of Economic Analysis uses to update Gross Domestic Product accounts, data used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in reporting monthly Producer Price Index changes, and data used by the Federal Reserve Board as input to indices of industrial production and capacity utilization.
- International activities:
 - The Census Bureau develops and maintains a comprehensive international demographic and socioeconomic database. It produces international demographic data and prepares estimates and projections, special international analyses and interpretive reports and monographs.
 - The Census Bureau provides technical advisory services for foreign governments, including developing and implementing statistical programs for censuses and surveys, conducting training, and developing statistical software and methodology.
- General activities:
 - The Census Bureau produces official population estimates and projections and yearly inventories of governmental unit boundaries.
 - Continuing research on statistical standards and census and survey methodology contributes not only to improvements in the work of the Census Bureau, but also to the bodies of statistical, economic, and demographic knowledge.
 - Ongoing evaluations supply the feedback needed to keep data collection activities relevant (see Appendix 1).

The Census Bureau works closely with numerous other government agencies and with nongovernmental entities, including businesses and nonprofit organizations. Some of these cross-cutting activities are described in Appendix 2.

The Challenges to the Census Bureau

The United States has a growing need for extensive, timely, and accurate data to manage the increasing

Enabling Mandates

- Title 13 of the United States Code provides for and ensures the confidentiality of various surveys and censuses.
- Section 401 of Executive Order 12656 directs the Secretary of Commerce to provide for the collection and reporting of census information on human and economic resources and to maintain a capability to conduct emergency surveys to provide information on the status of these resources as required for national security.
- Part 30-100 of Title 15 of the Code of Federal Regulations contains regulations pertaining to: foreign trade statistics, the official Census Bureau seal, the training of foreign countries in census procedures and general statistics, and cutoff dates for recognition of boundary changes for the decennial census and for furnishing personal data from the census of population and income estimates.
- Executive Order 12906 assigns to the Census Bureau responsibility for developing standards for governmental unit boundaries.

complexities of its population and its economy. Expectations of and demands on the Census Bureau will continue to grow. The complexities of the population and the economy in the twenty-first century present a number of challenges for the Census Bureau. For instance:

- **The challenge to maintain a high level of cooperation in our censuses and surveys.** As concerns grow about threats to privacy of information in the Internet age, about confidentiality of information provided to the government, and about intrusiveness of government programs, the Census Bureau faces challenges to collecting personal and sensitive information in its surveys and censuses.
- **The challenge to recruit and retain a highly skilled and motivated workforce.** The Census Bureau's status as the leading source of quality data is inextricably linked to its workforce – from the field representatives who collect the data to the mathematical statisticians who develop complex methodologies and all the people who manage and support the work of the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau will experience historically high numbers of retirements, and it must ensure that new staff are hired and that the knowledge of those who leave is passed along to the newest generation of Census Bureau employees.
- **The challenge to use new technologies to improve services and products.** As technological capabilities increase, customers will expect easier access, quicker turnaround, and greater comparability among different data sets. Respondents want

easier-to-use questionnaires. As the Census Bureau adopts more computer-assisted technologies, the challenge will be to maintain business, respondent, and customer confidence in the reliability, security, and integrity of e-business and other electronic collections and transactions.

- **The challenge to make information readily available to everyone, from the least to the most experienced data user.** The Census Bureau has a varied and diverse customer base that ranges from the U.S. Congress to the local data user in search of information for his or her neighborhood or block. The challenge is to develop cost-effective strategies for the continued delivery of useful information to this diverse customer base.

The Census Bureau's planning efforts have helped to define ways to address these challenges. For more information about the challenges considered in the development of this Strategic Plan, see Appendices 3 and 4.

The Census Bureau's Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan describes the goals and objectives that have been established to fulfill the Census Bureau's mission. The strategic plan consists of four interrelated goals and a fifth enabling goal that support the work and workforce. Strategic goals one, two, and four and enabling goal five are effective from FY2004 through FY2008, while strategic goal three, which includes the 2010 census, is effective through FY2013, reflecting the full-cycle budget period. The four strategic goals are as follows:

- **Strategic Goal 1: Meet the needs of policy-makers, businesses and nonprofit organizations, and the public for current measures of the U.S. population, economy, and governments.**
- **Strategic Goal 2: Support the economic and political foundations of the United States by producing benchmark measures of the economy and population for the administration and equitable funding of federal, state, and local programs.**
- **Strategic Goal 3: Meet constitutional and legislative mandates by implementing a reengineered 2010 census that is cost-effective, provides more timely data, improves coverage accuracy, and reduces operational risk.**
- **Strategic Goal 4: Support innovation, promote data use, minimize respondent burden, respect individual privacy, and ensure confidentiality.**

The execution of the Census Bureau's goal-based strategy depends on a fifth "enabling" goal that focuses on a stable infrastructure and administrative and human resources.

- **Enabling Goal 5: Maintain a high quality and motivated workforce and provide the environment to support them.**

Strategic Goals and Objectives

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: MEET THE NEEDS OF POLICYMAKERS, BUSINESSES AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS, AND THE PUBLIC FOR CURRENT MEASURES OF THE U.S. POPULATION, ECONOMY, AND GOVERNMENTS.

Informed decisions require reliable, up-to-date information. The Census Bureau's programs give decision makers current, timely updates on a wide range of subjects. Examples include unemployment, income, poverty, crime victimization, health insurance coverage, housing starts, retail and wholesale trade sales, international trade, corporate profits, and manufacturers' shipments, orders, and inventories.

Objective 1.1: Produce accurate, timely, and relevant information about the United States - its population, economy, and governments.

The Census Bureau provides statistics that are critical to understanding current conditions in the country. It does so directly by issuing official statistics and indirectly by providing source data to other agencies.

Strategies and means

- Deliver products at or above quality standards established by the Office of Management and Budget and the Census Bureau to ensure that the results of all surveys conducted maintain the public's trust and confidence.
- Provide top quality statistics on a broad set of current social and economic topics on or ahead of established schedules.
- Ensure relevance by releasing information as quickly as possible, by updating measures to reflect the changing characteristics of the population and the economy, and by dropping measures that are no longer useful. Doing so includes, for example, making improvements to income, poverty, and other measures of well-being and providing new definitions of metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas and urban areas, and new occupation, industry and product classification systems.
- Develop policy-relevant information and analytic reports that enhance understanding of trends in the nation and the world and describe the newest features of the U.S. economy and newest practices of U.S. businesses.

Measuring performance

- Data collected from the planned number of households, governments, or businesses necessary to meet designed levels of reliability.

- Statistics on all economic indicators and on the full range of current statistics released on or ahead of schedule.
- Quality standards such as standard errors met or exceeded for all data released.

Objective 1.2: Improve the efficiency of survey processes.

This objective focuses on integrating technological and methodological enhancements to improve survey processes and contain costs.

Strategies and means

- Develop information technology solutions including alternative methods of data collection (such as Internet reporting), new automated tools to create state-of-the-art collection instruments (such as graphically based software), and improved processing methods (such as standardized processing systems).

Measuring performance

- Percent of recurring surveys collecting data electronically.
- Unit cost of surveys.

Objective 1.3: Ease the reporting burden on respondents.

The success of data collection depends on the cooperation and participation of those who provide the data -- individuals, families, businesses, and governments. Minimizing the reporting burden on respondents increases cooperation and holds down costs.

Strategies and means

- Facilitate and simplify reporting by expanding electronic reporting capabilities and options, such as responding to recurring surveys via electronic means.
- Use respondent-centered approaches to data collection to facilitate participation and ease response. Examples are: providing respondents materials that show how information produced from their survey is used, rewording questions to ease comprehension, and implementing a customer-relations management program.
- Align data collection procedures with the record-keeping practices of households and businesses to encourage participation.
- Take full advantage of federal, state, and private sector information to eliminate redundant data requests.

Measuring performance

- Percent of businesses and governmental units responding electronically.
- Percent of households interviewed using electronic methods.
- Implementation, on or ahead of schedule, of new collection methods to enhance respondent satisfaction.

Objective 1.4: Produce new information using existing data sources by developing cutting-edge techniques and promoting knowledge sharing.

One of the greatest opportunities for improving current statistical measures arises from integrating various sources of information. Such integration will be carried out in a way that maximizes the utility of the data while maintaining confidentiality.

Strategies and means

- Conduct internal research and support external research that evaluates and improves methods, measures, and programs.
- Maintain external networks of experts to provide program advice.
- Develop and maintain microdata and other integrated products that can be used to advance society's understanding of current conditions and alternatives for the future.

Measuring performance

- Number of improvements to data coding, processing, and analysis as a result of findings from the Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Program.
- New insights into how the economy and society function, as revealed in papers generated through the Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies and Research Data Centers.

Objective 1.5: Meet the information needs of other agencies and countries by collecting data for them and providing technical assistance services.

Because of the Census Bureau's vast experience in designing, collecting, and disseminating current statistics, it is sought out by national and international public and private sector organizations for advice and operational assistance. This reimbursable work supplies vital information for external clients and provides continuity for the technological and field infrastructures essential to the successful conduct every 10 years of the constitutionally required census.

Strategies and means

- Implement and evaluate a new policy for accepting reimbursable work.

- Carry out reimbursable tasks in ways that provide accurate, timely, relevant, cost-effective, and accessible products for customers.
- Share knowledge with the international community. Provide advice and assistance to international organizations, public and private, in designing, collecting, and disseminating statistics.

Measuring performance

- All reimbursable projects completed on time, under or within budget, and according to customers' specifications.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES BY PRODUCING BENCHMARK MEASURES OF THE ECONOMY AND POPULATION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND EQUITABLE FUNDING OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL PROGRAMS.

The Census Bureau's benchmark programs are the principal sources of baseline information used to govern the United States. They include the decennial census of population and housing, the quinquennial economic census and the census of governments, and the Intercensal Demographic Estimates Program.

Objective 2.1: Produce accurate, timely, and relevant benchmark measures of the U.S. economy and state and local governments.

The economic census provides the nation with comprehensive, detailed, and authoritative facts about the structure of the U.S. economy. In doing so, the economic census directly supports the Department of Commerce's mission to promote job creation and improved living standards for all Americans.

The census of governments provides authoritative benchmark data in areas of public finance and employment; local government organization, powers and activities; state, federal, and local fiscal relationships; and property tax administration. It is the only source of comprehensive and uniformly classified data on the economic activities of state and local governments.

Strategies and means

- Determine the content and design of the economic census and census of governments to increase the relevance and usefulness of the data.
- Develop complete mail lists for the economic census and census of governments.
- Develop and deploy a streamlined and standardized system to collect and process economic census and census of governments data and integrate the data with data from administrative records, to achieve increased efficiencies and facilitate reporting by respondents.

- Conduct, process, publish, and disseminate information from the economic census and census of governments.

Measuring performance

- Percent of businesses and governments reporting in the 2002 Economic Census and the Census of Government.
- Percent of 2002 Economic Census and Census of Governments data disseminated to the public ahead of or on schedule.
- Cost, across entire 2002 Economic Census and Census of Governments cycles, to profile each \$100 billion in nominal 2002 Gross Domestic Product in comparison with the same statistic for 1997.
- Change in percent of 2002 Economic Census and Census of Governments data collected electronically compared with 1997.

Objective 2.2: Produce accurate, timely, and relevant population estimates for funding allocations and other purposes.

The intercensal demographic estimates program assists elected and appointed officials in allocating about \$200 billion each year by providing updated estimates of the United States' population for the country, states, counties, and functioning governmental units. Since the United States' population does not stand still between decennial censuses and governments base many of their funding decisions on the size and basic characteristics of the population, effective and efficient government requires these up-to-date estimates.

Strategies and means

- Develop, produce, and disseminate estimates of the population for the country, states, counties, and functioning governmental units by collecting, processing, evaluating, and integrating census, survey, and administrative records data from a variety of federal and state sources.
- Use the results of Census 2000, as well as newly developed sources of data on international migration, to revise and improve the assumptions and methods used to compile estimates of international migration.
- Incorporate the results of the American Community Survey (ACS) into population estimates to provide expanded demographic characteristics for small geographic areas.
- Develop a technologically integrated system for producing estimates that improves timeliness and reliability.
- Increase the involvement of state partners and other stakeholders in the production and quality review of estimates and projections.

Measuring performance

- Estimates incorporating the newly developed methodology for estimating net migration by component (legal migration, temporary migration, and unauthorized migration) released on or ahead of schedule.
- State and county age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin estimates that integrate school enrollment data, medicare data, and other administrative data released on or ahead of schedule.
- Population estimates and survey controls for all relevant subgroups and geographies produced on or ahead of schedule.

Objective 2.3: Produce accurate, timely, and relevant statistics by developing new samples that reflect the current characteristics and geographic location of the population.

Once a decade, following the decennial census, the Census Bureau selects new samples of the population that are the basis for the country's major surveys. Without this sample redesign effort, the information from these surveys — indicators such as the rate of violent crime and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) — would be less reliable and less representative of the nation. For instance, not redesigning the Consumer Expenditure Survey, which provides major input for the CPI, would likely cause continuing under or over statement of the true change in prices. In addition to serving as the government's chief gauge of inflation, the CPI is used to calculate cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security and other federal benefit payments, as well as some private benefit plans. According to the Congressional Budget Office, in FY1999, a 1-percentage point difference in the rate of growth of the CPI directly changes federal spending and revenue by a net total of almost \$6 billion per year.

Strategies and means

- Select representative samples of households for surveys through the Census 2000-based sample redesign program.
- Build an infrastructure for selecting samples of areas and housing units to respond quickly to changing information needs of the federal government. This infrastructure will rely on a continuously updated Master Address File and annual data from the American Community Survey.

Measuring performance

- Number of demographic surveys that introduce new Census 2000-based samples on or ahead of schedule.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: MEET CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE MANDATES BY IMPLEMENTING A REENGINEERED 2010 CENSUS THAT IS COST-EFFECTIVE, PROVIDES MORE TIMELY DATA, IMPROVES COVERAGE ACCURACY, AND REDUCES OPERATIONAL RISK.

Building on a successful Census 2000, the Census Bureau is planning a redesigned 2010 census that meets future needs and takes advantage of new technology. The ever-increasing demographic complexity of the United States combined with rapid changes and improvements in technology require a new approach to data collection. To meet this challenge, the Census Bureau has adopted a systematic and integrated strategy for the 2010 census.

Three critical components support the 2010 census:

- Implementing the American Community Survey to collect census long-form information on an ongoing yearly basis.
- Enhancing the MAF/TIGER (Master Address File/ Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing) address file and geographic database, taking advantage of aerial photography and geographic information system files from state, local, and tribal governments.
- Reengineering the 2010 census through a multi-year research, testing, and development program to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the American Community Survey, MAF/TIGER enhancements, and new technologies.

Objective 3.1: By FY2010, provide a reliable annual replacement for the long-form portion of the 2010 census using the American Community Survey.

The American Community Survey will be conducted nationwide in every part of the country (using a national sample size of 250,000 households per month) to move traditional once-a-decade long-form data collection out of the 2010 count and into a continuous data collection and publication activity. Implementation of the American Community Survey will allow the 2010 census to focus solely on short-form data collection and coverage.

Strategies and means

- Conduct the American Community Survey.
- Communicate with and release information to customers/stakeholders to ensure support for the reengineered census.
- Design and implement an evaluation program to ensure that the American Community Survey continues to provide accurate, relevant, timely, cost-effective, and accessible data throughout the decade and beyond.

Measuring performance

Ultimately, the success of the ACS will be its ability to meet the needs of data users who have historically had to rely on the once-a-decade long form of the census. This goal cannot be achieved without the sustained program and budget support of the administration and the congress. This support is necessary to ensure that the ACS fulfills its promise to produce accurate annual estimates (including multi-year averages for smaller areas) at the proposed levels of statistical reliability. Thus, over the course of the decade, two primary, measurable indicators of progress towards the ultimate goal will be the reliability and quality of the data being produced by the ACS. Specific measures are:

- Overall weighted response rate, based on three modes of data collection – mail, telephone, and personal visit.
- Statistical reliability levels for estimates of selected characteristics for various levels of geography.

Objective 3.2: Meet geographic requirements of the 2010 Census by developing systems that employ new technologies, enhancing geographic partnerships, and integrating quality assurance measures into the geographic and Master Address File systems and databases.

The MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program will improve the accuracy of the street and map features used for the American Community Survey and the 2010 census. Having street and map features in Global Positioning System (GPS) alignment will allow the Census Bureau to use GPS-enabled mobile computers to help enumerators be more efficient, facilitate the identification of duplicate addresses, and reduce the costs of finding housing units during nonresponse follow-up. Implementing a GPS-based MAF/TIGER system offers the opportunity to completely revolutionize data collection methodology. Because MAF/TIGER supports all Census Bureau statistical activities, the demographic survey programs and economic censuses also will benefit.

Strategies and means

- Locate and bring into GPS alignment every street and other map feature in the TIGER database, and implement an effective automated methodology to find new streets.
- Implement a modern processing environment for the MAF/TIGER system that will support the rapid development of new applications, allow extensive use of commercial off-the-shelf and geographic information system software, and reduce staff training time.
- Expand geographic partnership programs with state, local, and tribal governments, including a “rolling” Local Update of Census Addresses program and Web based updates of addresses, streets, governmental unit boundaries, and other geographic entity boundaries.

- Conduct Community Address Updating System operations for predominantly rural areas using automated technology.
- Implement a comprehensive plan for periodic MAF/TIGER evaluation and corrective activities that will guide planning for cost-effective improvements to coverage and geocoding operations.

Measuring performance

Ultimately, the success of the MAF/TIGER Enhancements Program will be determined through its ability to meet the address and geographic information needs of the ACS and the 2010 census. This multiyear effort will require sustained program and budget support from the administration and the congress. The primary indicator of progress towards that ultimate goal will be the Census Bureau's ability to complete the activities described above for all 3,141 counties and for Puerto Rico. The specific measure is the:

- Cumulative number of total counties for which map feature locations have been corrected in the MAF/TIGER database.

Objective 3.3: Develop, prototype, test, and integrate new and streamlined methods, taking advantage of the American Community Survey, the enhanced MAF/TIGER, and the results of Census 2000.

An improved 2010 census depends on the success of the American Community Survey and the enhanced MAF/TIGER that, taken together, will reduce risk, improve coverage, and contain costs. The early 2010 planning, developing, prototyping, and testing will use the enhanced MAF/TIGER, lessons learned from Census 2000, and a multiyear series of operational tests, culminating in a true dress rehearsal in 2008.

Strategies and means

- Test new methodologies and technologies aimed at improving the 2010 census.
- Modify the 2010 census plan based on test results.
- Continue to design a systems architecture for the 2010 census.
- Establish an integrated communications plan, including a plan for partnership activities and a process for stakeholder involvement, especially the continued involvement of the advisory committees and state, local, and tribal governments.

Measuring performance

Ultimately, the success of the 2010 census will be measured by its ability to meet legal deadlines, maintain or improve coverage for all population groups and geographic levels, contain costs, and mitigate the risk of operational failure. To do these things successfully, radically new and different procedures must be fully tested under census-like conditions, and refined well in advance of Census Day. This, and the significantly

increased use of automation planned for 2010, will require a sustained, multiyear effort of integrated planning, development, testing, revising, and retesting of all the many procedures and information technology needed to complete a successful census. This in turn will require sustained program and budget support from the administration and the congress. The primary indicators of progress towards that ultimate goal will be the Census Bureau's ability to design, conduct, and evaluate its research and development efforts, and its ability to design, develop, test, and deploy the information technology systems needed to conduct the program in 2010. Specific measures are:

- Number of planned research questions that are answered in each test.
- Completion of the baseline system architecture for 2010 on or ahead of schedule.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: SUPPORT INNOVATION, PROMOTE DATA USE, MINIMIZE RESPONDENT BURDEN, RESPECT INDIVIDUAL PRIVACY, AND ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY

The successful execution of the Census Bureau's goals and objectives depends on our capabilities as a global resource for statistical, survey, and technological research; geographic systems; and information services. Crosscutting programs provide essential support for survey and census collection, processing, and dissemination. Our abilities to exploit technology, acquire and use administrative records, measure and respond to privacy concerns, and apply the latest systems and statistical and survey methodologies, play a critical role in meeting the Census Bureau's mission to be the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy.

Objective 4.1: Minimize reporting burden and cost to taxpayers by acquiring and developing high-quality data from sources maintained by other government and commercial entities.

The Census Bureau also acquires records collected and maintained by other government or commercial entities, in addition to the data collected directly. The Census Bureau is obligated by law to use existing information, whenever possible, instead of asking for it directly. The use of these administrative records enhances the quality of the Census Bureau's own data collections and permits the development of timely, rich, and relevant products. Most importantly, the use of administrative records saves taxpayer dollars and minimizes reporting burden. While administrative records are a tremendous resource, the Census Bureau also recognizes the particular responsibilities and sensitivities inherent in their use. The Census Bureau must continue to develop the appropriate infrastructure, policies, and safeguards necessary to ensure that administrative records are used appropriately, securely, and with the utmost respect for the confidentiality of the data and any restrictions established by the agencies supplying them.

Strategies and means

- Conduct administrative records research directed toward improving and enhancing Census Bureau processes and products.
- Develop a Census Bureau-wide plan on the role of administrative records in censuses and surveys.
- Develop and disseminate Census Bureau-wide policy guidance and security/disclosure procedures that ensure both the appropriate acquisition and use of administrative record files and the delivery of products that incorporate administrative record information.
- Establish and maintain relationships with administrative record source agencies, program sponsors, the statistical community, and the general public that support the Census Bureau's expanded use of administrative records to produce timely, high-quality, low-cost statistics.

Measuring performance

- Milestones met or exceeded for the research and development of uses of administrative records to minimize respondent burden and cost.
- Number of new and relevant data products developed without increased data collection costs.

Objective 4.2: Foster trust and cooperation of the public by respecting privacy and ensuring confidentiality.

The Census Bureau is committed to safeguarding the public's privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of the data it collects. Recent Census Bureau studies indicate that privacy and confidentiality concerns may be impacting the Census Bureau's image, affecting census and survey response rates. Increasingly sophisticated computer searches and data linkages place the Census Bureau's traditional approaches to protecting confidentiality at greater risk and therefore raise concerns. Industry research indicates that privacy and confidentiality continue to blur in the public's mind.

Strategies and means

- Assess confidentiality and privacy aspects of data collection and dissemination methodologies and the use of administrative information to ensure continued protection of individual privacy.
- Assess possible disclosure risks in data products and, as necessary, develop methodologies and/or propose legislation to address concerns.
- Establish a Census Bureau-wide privacy and confidentiality program to fully integrate privacy and confidentiality policies and practices across all programs and to recommend and develop a comprehensive research agenda to support the Census Bureau's commitment to privacy and confidentiality.

Measuring performance

- Percent of the U.S. population with attitudes of trust toward the Census Bureau and who express a willingness to cooperate in data collection activities.
- Percent of employees who are trained and aware of privacy principles.
- Percent of systems/projects having a completed Privacy Impact Assessment.

Objective 4.3: Meet the geographic requirements of all Census Bureau programs by maintaining geographic tools and associated processing systems.

Provide core geographic systems — the databases, applications software, and processing environment required to produce the basic maps, address lists, address and geographic reference files, and associated processing systems — needed to meet the geographic requirements of all Census Bureau programs. The Census Bureau has developed an automated geographic support system that manages large volumes of geographic and address information from both internal and external sources to establish and maintain a current and complete inventory of streets, roads, and accurate boundaries and other attribute information. Information must be updated on a periodic and regular basis to meet the needs of the economic census, current demographic programs, Intercensal Demographic Estimates Program, the American Community Survey, and the early planning efforts of the 2010 census.

Strategies and means

- Update the existing MAF/TIGER database with addresses for new housing units and commercial structures from the U.S. Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File and add the new streets along which they are located.
- Generate current and complete geographic products and services using the updated MAF/TIGER.
- Support existing geographic partnerships with state, local, and tribal governments to provide revised boundary information using the Boundary and Annexation Survey.
- Perform quality assurance processes for geographic products and processes.

Measuring performance

- Percent of updated geographic products delivered on or ahead of schedule to meet the needs of the economic, demographic, and geographic programs.
- Participation rate of local and tribal governments in the annual Boundary and Annexation Survey.

Objective 4.4: Meet program collection, processing, and dissemination requirements by providing a robust and secure information technology environment.

The Census Bureau achieves economies of scale through centralized information technology services. The accuracy, timeliness, and efficiency of all Census Bureau programs is closely linked to the ability to provide stable and dependable information technology support and to continually increase the capacity for innovations in information technology. This objective supports the automated systems and technologies that are critical to all censuses, surveys, and programs.

Strategies and means

- Improve customer satisfaction with enterprise applications and support.
- Maintain availability of voice and data communications services.

Measuring performance

- Percent of customer satisfaction with the management and availability of information technology services and systems.

Objective 4.5: Improve the timeliness, accuracy, and relevance of our surveys and censuses through new applications of technologies and methodologies and share them globally.

A major challenge is to be responsive to technology needs and methodological improvements in the near term, while also supporting current systems. Research, testing, and prototyping of tools, systems, and new methods to improve data collection, capture, processing, and dissemination across programs support this objective. This is essential for the Census Bureau to meet its increasing customer demands for more complex information in a timely and efficient manner.

A vital aspect of this objective is sharing what we learn with other statistical entities throughout the world. By sharing new techniques, we have an opportunity not only to teach, but also to learn from the open exchange of ideas.

Strategies and means

- Identify effective uses of automation and telecommunications to integrate core processes of data collection, capture, processing, and dissemination.
- Identify, adapt, and promote improved statistical methodologies.

Measuring performance

- Percent of milestone dates and planned deliverables met in the design and testing of technology and methodology solutions for collection and processing tools/application systems.

Objective 4.6: Meet the changing needs of our customers by enhancing data products, services, and dissemination.

Information needs are constantly changing as circumstances and laws change and as data users become more knowledgeable about the uses of statistics. The Census Bureau must monitor changing data uses to anticipate what information will be needed and in what formats.

The Census Bureau plays a pioneering role in making information available electronically. As customers' demands for new means of dissemination grow, we will strive to anticipate and meet their changing needs. Customized portals, bilingual or multilingual sites, and Web training are examples of ways we might better serve our customers through electronic means. Feedback from users and potential users allows us to better understand which alternatives to pursue.

The Census Bureau enjoys a strong reputation for producing accurate information while protecting the confidentiality of the information collected. This reputation supports data collection activities by reassuring respondents not only that their individual information is protected, but that their participation is critical to the production of information that is vital to their community and country.

Strategies and means

- Develop a Census Bureau-wide approach for enhancing the usefulness and accessibility of products, services, and methods of dissemination. The primary means is to make Census Bureau information available through an integrated, electronic dissemination vehicle, American FactFinder.
- Support and promote widespread use of Census Bureau products in multiple media, using the Internet for its immediacy, ability to be customized, and breadth of reach, while also taking advantage of the strengths of other media for specific products and customers.
- Produce crosscutting information and reference products such as the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, *County and City Data Book*, *State and Metropolitan Area Data Book*, and the online *Product Catalog*.
- Develop a comprehensive research plan to monitor the product and dissemination needs of users and potential users.
- Inform and educate stakeholders, customers, and respondents on how to access and use Census Bureau products.
- Build on the Census Bureau's reputation through a coordinated, Bureau-wide program to ensure that the U.S. Census Bureau name is associated in a consistent manner for all products and activities.

Measuring performance

- Percent of customer satisfaction with Census Bureau data products and services.
- Percent of customer satisfaction with usability and accessibility of American FactFinder.

ENABLING GOAL 5: MAINTAIN A HIGH QUALITY AND MOTIVATED WORKFORCE AND PROVIDE THE ENVIRONMENT TO SUPPORT THEM.

The President's Management Agenda initiative on management of human capital challenges federal agencies to make the federal government more citizen-centered by strengthening front-line services and providing an efficient organization. The Census Bureau will use strategic workforce planning and flexible tools to recruit, retain, and reward employees and develop a high-performing workforce. We are developing strategies to retain and share the knowledge of our employees. And we are examining our core competencies to assess whether to build internal capacity or contract for services.

Supporting a highly skilled workforce also means ensuring that they have the tools needed to do their jobs well – including a safe and productive workplace, accurate and timely financial and management information, and secure and continuous computer and other systems.

Objective 5.1: Promote a culture of achievement by investing in human capital.

Approximately 45 percent of the Census Bureau's current permanent employees will be eligible for regular or early retirement by 2010. The Census Bureau must actively plan for succession in order to prevent anticipated shortages due to our aging workforce.

Without proper planning, the skill mix of the federal workforce will not reflect tomorrow's changing missions. For the Census Bureau, our mission is intricately connected to the people we describe. As the nation becomes more diverse, the Census Bureau's staff must reflect the increasing diversity of the American population if it is to do its job effectively.

Strategies and means

- Develop a succession management plan to attract, hire, develop, and retain a diverse pool of human resource talents.
- Lead and manage workers and contractors to maximize results and to minimize the number of decision layers.
- Continue to test telecommuting options.

Measuring performance

- Number of employees recruited through partnerships with colleges and universities, including those with diverse student populations.

- Employee satisfaction with incentives, training, and employee-oriented programs as measured through an employee survey.
- Criteria used for the Office of Management and Budget human capital scoreboard and OPM Human Capital Assessment and Accountability Framework standards for success.
- Percent of employees satisfied with the balance between work and family/personal life, as measured by the Organizational Assessment Survey.

Objective 5.2: Promote communication and collaboration within the Census Bureau.

Efficient and effective communication and collaboration are critical to the successful achievement of the Census Bureau's programs and to enabling employees to do their best work. Good communication can save money by preventing duplication of effort or expenditures. Strong collaboration across teams can spur creativity and foster new ideas.

Strategies and means

- Develop and implement plans to share work-related knowledge among employees and to transfer and preserve the knowledge of employees when they leave.
- Develop and implement plans to communicate with employees so that they are well informed about policies, programs, and other issues affecting them and their work.

Measuring performance

- Percent of employee satisfaction with communication as measured by the Organizational Assessment Survey.

Objective 5.3: Improve management performance.

Without accurate and timely management information, it is not possible to accomplish the President's Management Agenda to secure the best performance and highest measure of accountability for the American people.

Strategies and means

- Provide managers with accurate and timely financial and management data to better manage the Census Bureau's mission and resources.
- Support a clean audit opinion to ensure accountability to the American people.
- Act on audit findings in a timely manner.
- Continue financial management training to make more informed operational decisions.
- Use competitive sourcing, when appropriate, to meet mission objectives.

Measuring performance

- Funds covered by clean audits.
- Percent of managers' satisfaction with timeliness and quality of financial and management information.
- Management reports produced on or ahead of schedule.
- Criteria used for the Office of Management and Budget financial management scorecard.
- Cost savings due to competitive sourcing.

Objective 5.4: Provide a safe and productive workplace for employees that supports secure and continuous operations.

Workplace conditions will be critical issues in the next few years. Deteriorating buildings and erratic working conditions make it difficult to recruit and retain staff. Fortunately, new buildings are on the way, but the construction and the time required to complete the new buildings may hamper work during the next few years.

The events of September 11, 2001, made it necessary to revisit the Census Bureau's disaster recovery and continuity of operations efforts. This calls for the development of a more robust plan — a plan that will ensure fulfillment of the critical elements of the Census Bureau's mission in the event of a physical or biological attack. It also supports ongoing information technology security programs.

Strategies and means

- Work with the General Services Administration (GSA) to deliver a new headquarters building.

- Ensure that unsafe and unhealthy conditions are reported to the appropriate areas and are addressed in a timely manner.
- Establish and maintain up-to-date emergency procedures.
- Communicate building-related safety and health issues to employees.
- Ensure that critical or essential operations of the Census Bureau, if interrupted because of catastrophic events, can be re-established at the earliest possible moment.
- Promote information technology security that comports with the agency's enterprise architecture and supports business operations.

Measuring performance

- Timely and effective handling of service calls about workplace conditions.
- Number and percent of OSHA recordable workplace injuries.
- Percent recovery of tested systems during testing of continuity of operations capabilities.
- Percent of employees who have successfully completed Census Bureau information technology security training.

Appendix I

Program Evaluations

The Census Bureau is committed to the application of best practices through program evaluations. Evaluations are used to help the Census Bureau achieve its strategic goals via a formal, integrated, and corporate-focused approach. Using a multidisciplinary, multidivisional model, it is possible to comprehensively address census and survey program needs. Evaluation results inform the decision-making processes for data collection, data processing, data analysis, communication, information dissemination, and customer service operations, and provide a management tool for assessing and managing census and survey progress and performance. Some examples of program evaluations include:

Census 2000 Evaluation Program

For over half a century, the Census Bureau has conducted a formal evaluation program in conjunction with each decennial census. Such a program assists in evaluating the current census and in building the foundation for making early and informed decisions about the role and scope of the next decennial census. Census 2000 evaluations, completed in FY2003, form the basis for planning, testing, experimentation, and evaluation activities for the 2010 census.

American Community Survey Assessment

The Census Bureau has implemented an extensive testing program to compare data from the American Community Survey with data from the Census 2000 long form. Reports will cover survey quality, demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics and data for small areas.

MAF/TIGER

One of the major objectives of the MAF/TIGER enhancements program is the implementation of a comprehensive plan for periodic MAF/TIGER evaluation, quality reporting, and corrective activities that will guide planning for cost-effective ongoing coverage and geocoding improvement operations.

2010 Census Planning

2010 Census Planning includes the set of research and development activities to identify and develop new and improved census taking methods and systems. The program is organized around topics such as coverage, language, software, systems, and Americans living abroad. The nature of the work is expected to evolve as planned studies, tests, experiments, and evaluations occur over the decade and are integrated with the other two 2010 reengineered census program components. Tests in FY2004 and FY2006 are key parts of this program.

Appendix 2

Cross-Cutting Programs

The Census Bureau is involved in numerous cross-cutting programs and activities. Federal agencies use our data to allocate about \$200 billion in federal funds every year. The program data also set the definitions and standards used throughout the federal government for policy decisions. Specifically:

Reimbursable Work

Work performed under reimbursable agreements with other federal agencies (including the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Energy, and Justice; the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Center for Education Statistics, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, the Federal Reserve Board, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality) comprise a large part of our activities. For example, data from the Consumer Expenditures Survey are an important element of the Consumer Price Index, which the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) calculates and publishes. The Current Population Survey gathers data that BLS uses to calculate employment and unemployment statistics. Other major subject areas include health care, education, and criminal justice.

Intra-Department of Commerce

The Census Bureau works closely with other statistical agencies, in particular the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA). The BEA is a primary customer for the Census Bureau's economic and demographic data. For example, BEA uses data from the more than 100 annual, quarterly, and monthly economic surveys to develop the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Census Bureau is working with the International Trade Administration (ITA) to produce customized statistics on exported services. The ITA will fund the production of these statistics.

Other Government Agencies

Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is an important partner in the production of high-quality information that describes the labor force status and other key measures of the economy.

Interagency Council on Statistical Policy. Under the auspices of the Office of Management and Budget, the Census Bureau is a major participant in this council, which works to improve the collaborative activities of federal statistical agencies. Activities of the council have led to standardized data and concepts, technology transfers, methodology exchange, collaborative research, process improvement, better customer service, reduced respondent burden, and infrastructure sharing.

The Interagency Council on Statistical Policy established an interagency team on performance measurement and reporting in 1999 to review the performance plans of the statistical agencies and to recommend common approaches. The team has prepared a report that discusses performance indicators for statistical agencies and presents guidelines for a common approach to reporting performance.

State governments. The Census Bureau works closely with state and local governments. State governments help produce subnational population estimates through the Federal-State Cooperative Program for Local Population Estimates. States also provide updates to the Boundary and Annexation Survey, test data products, and disseminate data and program information through the State Data Center (SDC) program. This cooperative program between the states and the Census Bureau was created in 1978 to make information available locally to the public through a network of state agencies, universities, libraries, and regional and local governments. The Business and Industry Data Center (BIDC) program was added in 1988 to meet the needs of local business communities for economic information.

Tribal governments. Through the Tribal Governments program, the Census 2000 Tribal Liaison program, and other operations such as the Boundary and Annexation Survey, the Census Bureau works closely with American Indians and Alaska Natives. Tribal governments assist with boundary identification, count review, outreach and promotion, and data dissemination.

Government/Private Sector

The Census Bureau consults extensively with businesses and business associations in the development of economic surveys. Census Information Centers (CIC) were established as a cooperative program with national, regional, and local nonprofit organizations that represent the interests of underserved communities. CICs make data available for program planning, advocacy needs assessment, defining service areas, public policy development, developing new business enterprises, and conducting race/ethnic-related research.

International/Private Sector

The International Programs Center (IPC) conducts demographic and socioeconomic studies and strengthens statistical development around the world through technical assistance, training, and software products. Its work is commissioned and funded by federal agencies, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, private businesses, and other governments. For more than 50 years, the IPC has assisted in the collection, processing, analysis, dissemination, and use of statistics with other governments throughout the world.

Appendix 3

Management Challenges

Consistent with the Management Challenges identified in the Department of Commerce's Strategic Plan, the Census Bureau faces a number of key challenges.

The Census Bureau views the following as among the most significant, for their importance to our mission or to the nation's well-being; for their complexity; for their cost; or for the urgency of their need for management improvements:

The President's Management Agenda

The Census Bureau works hard to manage resources wisely and effectively. The President's vision of a government that is citizen-centered, results-oriented, and that promotes innovation through competition fits well with the Census Bureau's history and goals. The President's Management Agenda specifies five government-wide initiatives. These initiatives cover strategic management of human capital, competitive sourcing, improved financial performance, expanded electronic government, and budget and performance integration.

Our strong commitment to accomplishing these tasks is reflected in this Strategic Plan. For example, to expand e-government opportunities for both data collection and dissemination, we have made it possible for individuals, businesses, and local governments to respond through the Internet, and for data users to get the information they need through American FactFinder, an electronic data dissemination tool. Other Presidential initiatives are reflected in the Strategic Plan, particularly in Goal 5.

Data Stewardship

Data stewardship is a key focus of the Census Bureau's management. Data stewardship involves establishing policies that preserve privacy and confidentiality, reduce reporting burden, and maximize data use. As technology provides us with greater abilities to collect, process, and disseminate data, it also presents greater challenges to protect data from improper access and use. Data, publicly available through the Internet, and record linkage technologies have the potential to permit some to defeat our data protection safeguards. What was considered a very low risk just a few years ago, may soon become an unacceptable risk.

The Census Bureau's growing dependence on administrative records in its surveys, censuses, and modeling activities will be tested by relationship changes with administrative agencies. Increasingly, government agencies will be pressured to improve, streamline, and revamp program activities in response to legislation, budget cutting activities, audits, and/or privacy concerns. Despite working closely with providing agencies, the Census Bureau could face the prospect

of redesigning affected programs with very little lead time and inadequate research. The Census Bureau's ability to respond successfully to these changes will be critical to its continued access to administrative records.

Workforce Management

About 45 percent of the Census Bureau's employees will be eligible for early or regular retirement by 2010. With so many becoming eligible for retirement in the near future, the Census Bureau must recruit, develop, and retain the next generation of employees. This will require planning to ensure that specialized technical, managerial, and subject-matter knowledge, as well as the Census Bureau's corporate culture, values, and institutional knowledge, are transferred.

Recruiting and retaining the best employees is always difficult and could be more so in the future. The government is seen as offering less interesting, less challenging work; lower pay; fewer rewards for outstanding performance; and fewer opportunities for initiative and independent work than the private sector. The Census Bureau will need to have strong incentives to recruit and retain staff; effective training opportunities to keep employees up-to-date; and meaningful career development programs. Incentives such as recruiting bonuses; funds and assistance for relocation; transportation subsidies; repayment of student loans; and childcare and assistance with household responsibilities are some of the enticements being offered.

Additionally, the Census Bureau needs to view workforce development from a new, broader perspective. Increasingly, employees expect to be able to branch out into new areas and have work assignments that are expansive and challenging both in their content and location. In order to retain talented employees, the Census Bureau must invest to broaden their professional experiences and increase their skills to advanced levels.

Finally, a diverse workforce, representative of the public that it measures, will enable the Census Bureau to do a better job, to be sensitive when collecting information from all segments of the population, and to create products that more fully meet the needs of all customers. The Census Bureau must strive not only to maintain a workforce with the appropriate skills, but also one that reflects the diversity of the nation. Awareness of all these trends is critical to developing the depth and flexibility that will be required of the Census Bureau workforce of the future.

Workplace Conditions

Workplace conditions will be critical issues in the next few years. Deteriorating headquarters buildings make it difficult to recruit and retain staff. Fortunately, new

buildings are on the way, but the construction and the time required to complete the new buildings may hamper our work.

Telecommuting will become a more common practice - whether from home or from remote offices. The Census Bureau needs to address two issues to take full advantage of telecommuting: a full range of electronic communications and confidentiality reinforcements. Electronic communications need to permit the sharing of information and the capacity to transfer work projects back and forth. The Census Bureau must be able to continue to maintain confidentiality, both in fact and in perception, when it permits employees to work at home. Increased costs as well as concerns about information technology security may complicate this task.

Appendix 4

External Factors

The United States has a growing need for extensive, timely, and accurate information to manage the increasing complexities of its population and its economy. The Census Bureau's ability to supply the necessary information depends on a number of factors, both within the government and in the society as a whole.

Governmental Influences

The Census Bureau continues to be influenced by themes, policies, and circumstances that affect the entire federal government, as well as considerations unique to the Department of Commerce.

The Economy and the Federal Budget

The economy and policies to address economic issues are likely to challenge the ability to initiate new programs and even to conduct current activities. The Census Bureau may face declining resources - of staff, money, and facilities. It may be increasingly difficult to justify needed spending. The Census Bureau also may find itself burdened by unfunded mandates in order to satisfy the information needs of legislative and executive customers. Further, the cyclical nature of the work the Census Bureau does makes it difficult to get consistent Congressional support for ongoing programs as well as for new initiatives.

Demands on the federal budget during the next few years will be substantial and Members of Congress will have to make difficult choices. Our challenge will be to demonstrate the critical importance of accurate information to the government and the economy.

Other Government Agencies

The relationships of the Census Bureau with other government agencies also may present challenges. Agencies that sponsor data collection or other activities may need to accommodate declining resources. Agencies with which the Census Bureau cooperates may need to change policies or priorities. It may be difficult to anticipate such secondary effects in time to deal with them effectively.

Customer Influences

Meeting the needs of our customers is at the heart of our vision to be the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. Over our first 100 years, the Census Bureau has focused on collecting and producing the most accurate information possible. More recently, the Census Bureau has improved access by making information available through the Internet and through data dissemination networks, such as the State Data Centers, Census Information Centers, and Research Data Centers. These efforts require sustaining

resources, but often are the first programs to be cut in lean times.

The Census Bureau has a varied and diverse customer base that ranges from the most sophisticated analyst to the inexperienced one-time user. Recent technological advances allow the Census Bureau to make more information available more quickly to more users. In many respects, the Census Bureau sets the pace in providing data electronically. However, there are challenges associated with creating a single data dissemination tool that meets everyone's needs. A system that frustrates some customers will be seen as a failure, even if it effectively serves the needs of most.

With technological advances, the tension between providing access to information and protecting confidentiality is growing. The Census Bureau must continue to explore options that achieve both. For example, the Research Data Centers may become more important as a way to give access without compromising confidentiality. The use of modeled data may become more common.

Serving customers well requires that the Census Bureau accurately anticipates and plans for their future requirements. The Census Bureau is always learning and must ensure that it continues to gather information on how best to serve customers' needs. The Census Bureau must consider new approaches to save customers time and money, improve customer relations, and ensure that customer's needs are met.

Societal Influences

Impact of Terrorism

The events of September 11, 2001, and afterwards could have long-term consequences for the Census Bureau. Certainly, there will be budgetary challenges as the government supports a range of activities to counter the terrorist threat. Changes in attitudes toward the government and in concerns about privacy and confidentiality issues and heightened security measures for people, computers, and buildings could affect our ability to collect and produce timely and accurate information.

Perceptions of the Role of Government in Society

The United States has gone through several peak and valley periods in how its residents have viewed the role of government. Prior to September 11, 2001, some political scientists and students of public administration anticipated a period in which people expected a somewhat reduced role for the federal government. Since September 11, there seems to be greater confidence in government and the expectation that government will play a stronger role, particularly in areas even remotely related to homeland security. The Census

Bureau will need to monitor these trends closely and analyze their potential impact.

Privacy

Privacy is a complex issue and involves components of intrusiveness and confidentiality. In the Internet era, the public has grown wary of private sector use (and misuse) of personal information collected for one reason and used for a different reason without their knowledge or consent. Identity theft using social security numbers has made many wary about providing personal information and has led to proposed legislation to restrict the use of social security numbers and to routinely change each number. Concerns over the intrusiveness of the census long form in 2000 threatened the success of the census and resulted in support from high-ranking officials for those who did not wish to respond to questions they considered sensitive.

September 11, 2001, could have tremendous impact on this nation's collective attitude about privacy. The creation of extensive databases and the mandated sharing of confidential information are under consideration or have become law in the Patriot Act — steps that would have been inconceivable before September 11. At the same time, concerns about the risk of singling out groups based on ethnicity, origin, race, or religion may be heightened. Fears that information provided to the Census Bureau or any government agency could be used against individuals or businesses may increase at the same time that the populace demands greater security from terrorism. Any concerns about privacy of information in the Internet age, about confidentiality of information provided to the government, and about intrusiveness of government programs are challenges to the Census Bureau in collecting personal information in its surveys and censuses.

Addressing privacy issues will involve thoroughly assessing the public's views and measuring changes over time. Also, the Census Bureau will need to work with external groups to understand their concerns and possible options. To minimize burden and intrusiveness, the Census Bureau may need to make even greater use of administrative records. This could result in perceptions that the Census Bureau is creating a population register that the government could use to further target groups it did not like. Strong negative public reactions not only to the Census Bureau's, but also the government's, collection, linkage, and use of personal information will dramatically affect Census Bureau programs. These effects could be mitigated by conducting privacy impact assessments and by establishing a visible and active privacy function to educate the public on how the information is used and how their privacy is protected.

Cultural Diversity

Racial and ethnic minorities are becoming a proportionately larger component of the population. In 2000, slightly more than 1 of 10 people in the United States was foreign born. This growing cultural diversity will

continue to bring new challenges to how the Census Bureau conducts its work. It will affect the methods the Census Bureau uses to collect information, the questions asked, and the presentation of the information. Traditional surveys may require more materials in languages other than English and different approaches to reaching out to different communities. Increased immigration and emigration will raise issues about whom to include in the census (or exclude from it) and how to do it. For example, the Census Bureau, in response to congressional interest, is conducting a testing program to determine the operational feasibility, quality and cost of collecting data from all Americans living overseas. The Census Bureau now, per OMB directive, allows respondents to report more than one race. This issue will continue to evolve over the next several years and may require new approaches. There are other aspects of diversity, such as the aging of the population and the workforce, and different approaches to work of the younger generations that need to be addressed.

Technological Influences

It will be increasingly difficult for the Census Bureau's core businesses, censuses and surveys, to stay in front of the demand from policymakers for timely information on emerging economic and societal trends without the use of state-of-the-art technology. Likewise, Census Bureau management requires effective and efficient information management tools.

The rapidly changing information technology environment, including changes in hardware, software, applications, Internet use, and uses within the user community, influences how the Census Bureau collects, processes, and disseminates data and information. The Census Bureau depends on congressional funding for initiatives to support technology innovations. While the Congress controls funding, they also impose mandates, such as accessibility requirements, that add to the cost of implementing new technology. The Census Bureau also needs to obtain/retain qualified staff and continue to train them to remain competitive within this environment.

Expanding technological capabilities will drive increased customer/user expectations for ease of access, quick turnaround times, simple interface mechanisms, and comparability between different sources of data. Customers also want enhanced quality of products and services, including more functionality in data collection instruments as the Census Bureau migrates to electronic reporting and computer-assisted technologies. As the use of electronic reporting expands, the need for business, respondent, and customer confidence in the reliability, security, and integrity of electronic collection and transactions will increase.

In the long term, the Census Bureau will be able to do much of its data collection through automated means. It is already heading in that direction. However, the Census Bureau needs to ensure it applies technology effectively. Usability tests, along with behavioral and

cognitive studies, will be needed to ensure the Census Bureau improves and maintains response rates. As technology is applied, the Census Bureau needs to take full advantage of the improved processes and adjust for these changes rather than adding layers and redundancies to an existing environment.

The President's Management Agenda directs agencies to expand the use of the Internet. For data collection and dissemination, the Census Bureau must carefully examine its processes to serve the public through increased use of the Internet.

As always, the Census Bureau must consider and mitigate the possibility of criminal and/or malicious access to all of its networks and data.

